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Citation:

Omar, K, Scheepers, H and Stockdale, R 2013, 'The use of social media in government 2.0 assessed through the public value lens', in Hepu Deng and Craig Standing (ed.) ACIS 2013: Information systems: Transforming the Future: Proceedings of the 24th Australasian Conference on Information Systems, Melbourne, Australia, 4-6 December, 2013, pp. 1-12.

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Information Systems: Transforming the Future

**24th Australasian Conference on Information
Systems, 4-6 December 2013, Melbourne**

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The Use of Social Media in Government 2.0 Assessed Through the Public Value Lens

Khayri Omar,
Faculty of Information and Communication Technologies
Swinburne University of Technology
Victoria, Australia
Email: komar@swin.edu.au

Helana Scheepers
Faculty of Information and Communication Technologies
Swinburne University of Technology
Victoria, Australia
Email: hscheepers@swin.edu.au

Rosemary Stockdale
Faculty of Information and Communication Technologies
Swinburne University of Technology
Victoria, Australia
Email: rstockdale@swin.edu.au

Abstract

This paper investigates the role of social media in the creation of public value by local governments. By assessing the added value of social media through a public value lens we aim to explore more deeply how the use of social media tools impact on public value creation. We propose a conceptual framework based on the theoretical perspectives of public value concepts and public values inventories to support the examination of Gov2.0 services. An exploration of the literature indicates that the creation of public value is highly dependent on three main sources: development of public trust in government, delivery of quality public services, and the achievement of socially desirable outcomes. The framework draws together the elements of public value as determined by Moore (1995) Kelly et al., (2002), Kearns (2004), and the public values inventory by Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007).

Key words

Government 2.0, Social Media, Public Value, Public sector

INTRODUCTION

Government 2.0 (Gov 2.0) is founded on the concept of providing citizens with an innovative role in public service and governance activities through the use of their social networking and content sharing activities (Osimo 2008). Social media promises much for open government and improvements in citizen participation and collaboration (Piaggese et al. 2011). Gov 2.0 is noted for the values of openness, transparency and collaboration and O'Reilly (2009) refers to it as government use of collaborative technological innovation to set-up an open sourced, computing platform through which government, citizens and innovative businesses can enhance government openness and efficiency, consequently enhancing citizens' lives. The benefits of open government are being recognised as evidenced by the Obama Administration's Directive that has transformed government interaction in the US through advocating the use of social media (Wigand 2012). In Australia, the AGIMO report (2012) shows that Federal Government agencies have widely embraced social media and Web 2.0 tools.

Such widespread use requires that government administrators gain external and objective feedback on their e-government efforts (Huang 2007) to have a better understanding of the benefits and return on their investments. Wimmer et al. (2008) argue that 'a clear understanding of the value of e-government, and value for whom, is needed' (p. 6). In the age of social media, Wigand (2012, p. 13) calls for further research to identify the 'metrics [that] can be used to assess the effectiveness of social media'. One method of evaluation that takes the citizens' perspective and enables a holistic assessment of value is that of Public Value. Current studies tend to concentrate only on evaluating social media's contribution to specific dimensions in government, but a public value perspective will enable an assessment in terms of the enhancement of trust between citizens and government (Grabner-Kräuter 2009), improvements in the quality of public services (Misuraca 2012), and helping towards achieving desirable outcomes (Karunasena and Deng 2010).

The contribution of this paper is the development of a framework that supports the assessment of the public value of social media use from a 'citizen's eye' perspective. The proposed conceptual framework is based on theoretical perspectives of public value drawn from Kelly et al. (2002) and Kearns (2004) and from the public value inventories of Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007). The framework will enable and support further research into how the use of social media impacts on the creation of public value and contributes towards enhancing trust, improving service quality and improving desirable outcomes for citizens. The paper is organised as follows. We first define and discuss the concept of public value from different perspectives. We then discuss how Gov 2.0 is used as a citizen-centric platform for public value creation and how evaluation approaches relate to e-government public value. In the next section we bring together the concept of public value and identify the main sources that contribute towards the conceptual framework in a Gov 2.0 context. Finally, we will draw our conclusions and highlight some future directions for research.

PUBLIC VALUE

The concept of public value is very significant for public sector administrators. As stressed by Jørgensen and Bozeman, there is '*no more important topic in public administration and policy than public values*' (2007, p. 355). Public sector reform is a common occurrence across many countries (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004) and several strategies have been adopted in an effort to improve contributions to value. For example, in recent years, the public sector has been reformed from Traditional Public Administration to New Public Management and recently towards Public Value Management (Kelly et al. 2002; Moore 1995). In the 1980s, many OECD countries adopted the strategy of New Public Management (NPM) to modernise and reform the public sector (Hood 1991). A common problem of NPM is that it evaluates public service efficiency based on the average cost of processing a given output, rather than examining the potential outcomes that are valued by citizens (Raus et al. 2010). For example, Raus et al. (2010) stress that '*measuring how cost-effective a government website is, provides quantity of information rather than the usefulness and relevance of the information to the citizen*' (p. 124). As a consequence the idea of public value has been developed to give a clearer view of government performance. For Moore (1995), public organisation strategy should be about three main concepts; creating public value, being legitimately and politically sustainable, and being operationally and administratively feasible. Creating public value is about recognising the value that the public organization wants to create for its citizens and should inform the activities of public managers (Moore 1995). Kelly et al. (2002, p. 4) define public value as '*the value created by government through services, laws, regulation and other actions*', and argue that it will be genuinely valued by citizens. They identified trust, services, and outcome as the main sources of public value creation.

Public value attempts to capture the difference between outputs and outcomes (Walker 2009) and exists at both individual and collective levels (Bozeman 2007). Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) address several essential issues affecting public value conceptualization consisting of clarifying the origins of public values, illustrating their hierarchy, and demonstrating the relationships between public values. Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) offer an inventory of seven main perspectives including seventy-two categories of public values. They conclude that '*public value is not governmental*' (2007, p. 372), arguing that public value can be created by citizens too. Through the replacement of government tasks by user driven innovation, online interaction using social media tools can impact on governments where public value can now also be generated by individuals (Misuraca 2012). Public managers must now ask not only whether their targets have been achieved, but whether society has gained any net benefits as a result of their activities (Stoker 2006). Web 2.0 can play a fundamental transformative role in government concerning such areas as transparency, accountability, communication and collaboration, and can promote deeper levels of civic engagement (Mergel 2012). Scholars have stressed that citizen interaction with governments using Web 2.0 technologies has significant potential for public value creation as identified by Moore (1995), Kelly et al. (2002), and Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007).

GOV 2.0 AS A CITIZEN-CENTRIC PLATFORM FOR PUBLIC VALUE CREATION

Online communities, social networking and user-generated content production are bringing new elements to the development of electronic government. These new features are based on a new logic of the Web, referred to as Web 2.0. When applied to the public sphere, this idea has been labelled as Government 2.0. This is a new trend that challenges governments to assess their role in society and especially their relationship with citizens. (Anttiroiko 2010, P. 18).

Government interaction with citizens using Web 2.0 platforms fosters the creation of public value through public services and legislation (Misuraca 2012). This new type of interaction via social media tools has potential impacts on public e-governance domains in the areas of: political participation, transparency, accountability, user involvement and empowerment, mass-collaboration, public services delivery, reinforcing knowledge sharing and management, and supporting organisational and legal change (Misuraca 2012). The real promise of Web 2.0 for government depends on government-citizen relationships, service operations and management, and governance.

Typically, citizen collaboration and widespread intelligence are significant drivers for the incorporated values of Gov 2.0, based on collective problem-solving. Citizen-generated content can add value through enhanced communication, content sharing, social networking and collective intelligence. (Anttiroiko 2010). The utilization of Gov 2.0 initiatives as a medium for government-citizen interaction will boost citizen engagement and overall satisfaction of government (Liu 2012). Citizen participation has significantly developed from being motivated to take part in policy definition and decision-making activities via Web 2.0, towards the stage where they are increasingly becoming realised as co-designers of public services and an active element in public value creation (Misuraca 2012). Social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and, YouTube offer citizens the capability to post, discuss, share content, be involved in dialogue and work collectively on public policies (Alonso et al. 2009).

Social media are powerful and essential tools for governments to contact citizens and obtain feedback from them. Citizens' feedback and government interactions with citizens through social media avenues have a positive impact on mutual responsiveness and encourages more transparency (Mergel 2012). It also allows for the creation of direct and immediate feedback cycles, and increases citizens' demands for real-time feedback from government (Mergel 2012). These feedback cycles can make a contribution to public organizations as they allow for opinions and input from citizens that inform agencies of their citizens' needs and enable them to respond positively and put into practice further functionalities. Such activities, supported by Gov 2.0 initiatives can improve the quality of public services and public sector organizations' efficiency and effectiveness (Misuraca 2012). Bertot et al. (2010) argue that the main potential strengths of social media use in the public sector lie in their capability to be used as tools for collaboration, participation, citizen empowerment, and time saving. This type of citizen engagement can boost government interactions with individuals, develop trust with special interest groups, and support better decision-making by capturing the value of local knowledge (Glasco 2012). Wigand (2012) argues that there is a paradigm shift from monologue towards dialogue in government-citizen activities that can foster a sense of community. The '*trust and confidence*' being formulated on these platforms is going to have an essential impact on community construction (Van Bavel et al. 2004).

EVALUATING THE PUBLIC VALUE OF E-GOVERNMENT

Public value approaches have become a new tool to evaluate the level of public sector services as seen, for example, in the UK and Australia (Talbot 2008). In the context of e-government, a considerable number of frameworks have been developed to evaluate public value (e.g. AGIMO 2004; European Commission 2006; Grimsley and Meehan 2007; Karunasena and Deng 2010; Kearns 2004; Omar et al. 2011). Their main shortcomings in terms of this study are that none of them have been developed on the basis of evaluating the public value of Gov 2.0 where social media tools are employed in government service delivery activity and interaction with their citizens. The interpretation of public values used in previous frameworks may not reflect the Gov 2.0 environment where citizens can contribute very significantly towards their local governments in public value creation processes. To this end, we have developed a framework that will extend the use of public value evaluation into the Gov 2.0 environment. Jørgensen and Bozeman have concluded that '*public value is not governmental*' (2007, p. 372), and we argue that in the environment of Gov 2.0, citizens can contribute significantly in public value creation together with their local governments. This contribution is predominantly within the main sources of public value identified by Kelly et al. (2002) and Kearns (2004), which are a) development of public trust in government, b) delivery of quality public services, and c) the achievement of socially desirable outcomes. Furthermore, many of the values in Jørgensen and Bozeman's (2007) inventory can be adopted from the public administration field to be used for evaluating the public value created through the use Gov 2.0 tools. These constructs are brought together in Figure 1 and discussed below.

Development of Public Trust

The development of public trust in government (A in Figure 1) is a main source of public value as identified by Kelly et al. (2002) and (Kearns 2004). From Jørgensen and Bozeman's (2007) inventory, the literature suggest that three groups can contribute to the development of public trust in government are: *dialogue* (Grabner-Kräuter 2009; Theunissen and Wan Noordin 2012), *openness* (Persson 2000), and *accountability* (Bozeman 2002). These are discussed in the context of Gov 2.0 as follows:

Dialogue: The relationship between trust and dialogue is extensively linked. While the development of trust is crucial and necessary for dialogue (Theunissen and Wan Noordin 2012), ongoing interactions and positive encounters in Gov 2.0 initiatives can improve the initial trust of users (Grabner-Kräuter 2009). E-government initiatives are not only about exchange of ideas and opinions, but allow for meaningful understanding of the way in which citizens think (Pieczka 2011). Gov 2.0 initiatives changed the way citizens engage in a dialogue with government in order to resolve problems. This change is viewed as the government shifting from one directional to two-way directional dialogue with public officials paying more attention to citizens' opinions and seeking their feedback (Wigand 2012). Gov 2.0 initiatives allow government to engaging in ongoing dialogues in a semi-public platform (Chadwick 2008). Through the continuous dialogue and sharing of values with citizens, government can

plan for new services, innovative socio-economic solutions, and higher quality of life (Glasco 2012). The appreciative interactions developed during the dialogue, regardless of the groups involved, will help to develop trust and enhance relationships (Finegold et al. 2002). Government can enhance citizen trust online by increasing dialogue with citizens (Grabner-Kräuter 2009; Theunissen and Wan Noordin 2012). In their public value inventory, Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) related the dialogue value with values of responsiveness, user democracy, and citizen involvement, and self-development, which are related here to the context of Gov 2.0.

Responsiveness is the level where services provided online are helpful and there is a timely response to citizens (Tan et al. 2008). It determines the degree to which a public institution matches the demands of its public (Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007). Government can enhance citizen trust online by increasing dialogue with citizens and thereby increasing perceptions of responsiveness (Bertot et al. 2010). Gov 2.0 can facilitate immediate and direct feedback and responsiveness that is similar to face to face interactions (Boyd and Ellison 2007; Joinson 2008). Enhancing the relationship between citizens and government in policy-making processes allows for additional participatory democracy as well as a further robust democracy (Nabatchi and Mergel 2010). Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) have included responsiveness as a sub-value in two second order constructs; that of *dialogue* and that of *openness*. Thus, it is considered further in discussion of the latter construct.

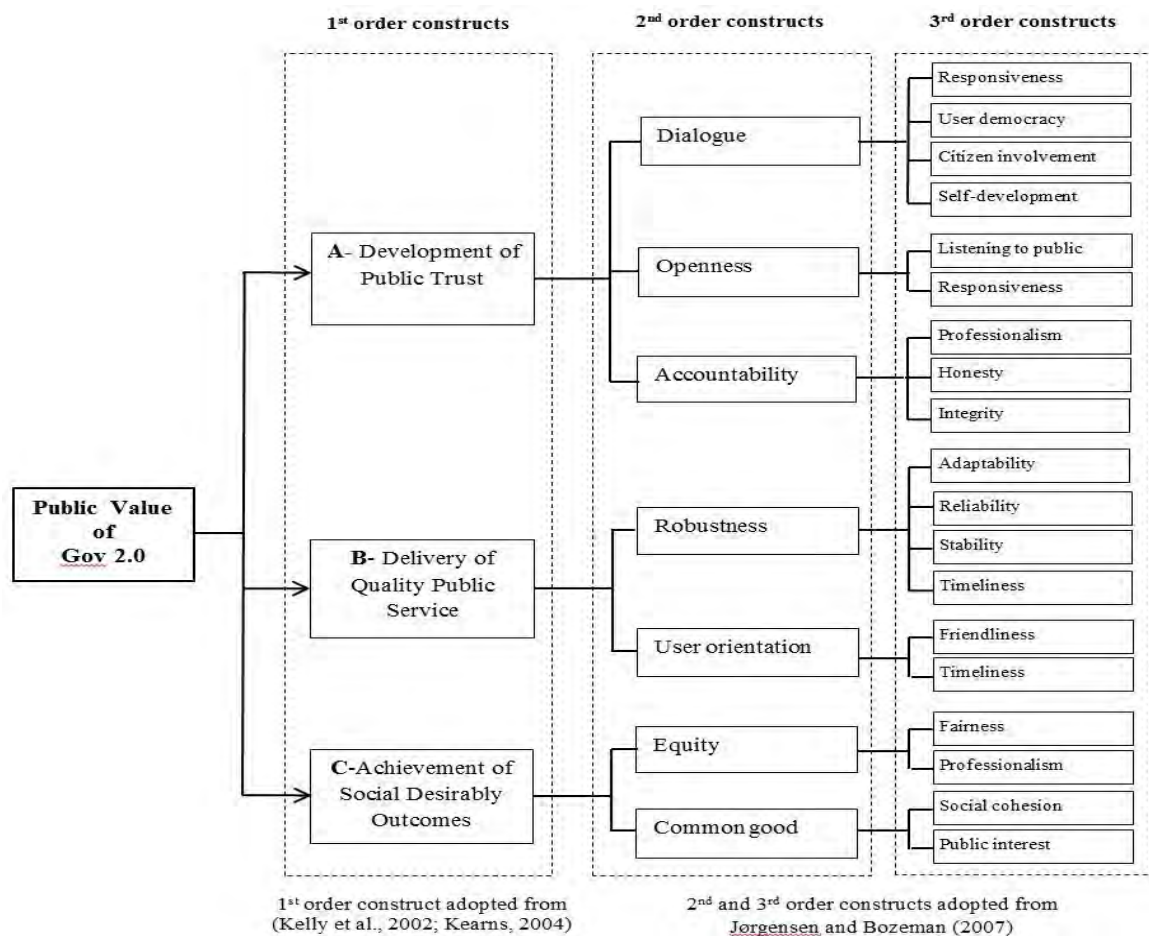


Figure 1: A conceptual framework for evaluating public value of Gov 2.0

User democracy. Democracy is linked to public trust in government (Goldfinch 2009). Generally, democracy is defined as ‘any one of a family of views according to which the public deliberation of free and equal citizens is the core of legitimate political decision making and self-government’ (Bohman 1998. P. 2). Democracy shares several of its key concepts with Gov 2.0 such as participation, interactive, citizen-centric, and dialogue. Continuous dialogue is very important for the boosting of democratic enablement because it enhances the politicians degree of understanding of their citizens’ viewpoints (Meynhardt 2009). Dialogue is one of the principles Web 2.0 is built upon (Wigand 2012) in the environment of Gov 2.0 it results in a freeing of citizen participation barriers and raising levels of user democracy (Cormode and Krishnamurthy 2008).

Citizen involvement is essential to government-citizen dialogue; for example citizen involvement in local planning hearings in local governments (Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007). Citizen involvement and participation can make a significant contribution to improving the understanding of processes, enhancing the quality of decisions,

promoting citizen empowerment and supporting democratic citizenship (Innes and Booher 1999; Owens 2011). The concepts of citizen involvement and citizen participation are intrinsically linked (Isaías et al. 2012) with the latter incorporating various forms of citizen activity in local community problem-solving, including self-help groups. Citizen participation is *“the social process of taking part (voluntarily) in either formal or informal activities, programmes and/or discussions to bring about a planned change or improvement in community life, services and /or resources”* (Bracht 1991, p.478).

Self-development refers to *“the empowerment of an individual’s abilities, skills, and knowledge, as that person augments and realizes his or her personal potential”* (Savolainen and Kari 2004, p, 416). Frissen (2005) stresses that the empowerment of users is one of the vital features of Web 2.0 technologies. User empowerment involves citizen empowerment (Misuraca 2012) and empowering individuals through open dialogue is one of the main concepts behind Gov 2.0 (Sadeghi et al. 2012). Web 2.0 technologies implemented by government enable citizens to conduct dialogue (i.e. two ways) communication with community professionals and government officials informing themselves and expressing their opinions. Government-citizen dialogue via Web 2.0 platforms can lead to citizen development.

Openness is the second of Jørgensen and Bozeman’ (2007) values, drawn from their inventory, that contributes to the development of trust. Persson (2000) argues that openness is the only way to get trust. Openness indicates the degree to which government agencies show their decision procedures and processes and publish information and facts in a timely manner (Wong and Welch 2004). Gov 2.0 initiatives make it possible for citizens to obtain a picture of the performance of government and offer innovative means of openness through the enormous capability for interaction and content sharing (Mergel 2012). This can have an impact on citizens’ perception of their government’s openness (Wigand 2012). Openness impacts on the improvement of relationships because it involves the readiness of partners to reveal and share sensitive data and information (Mayer and Salovey 1993). This in turn increases citizens’ trust as they have an increased ability to access government information and an improved perception of openness (Shim and Eom 2008). From the public value perspective, Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) related the openness value with values of listening to public opinion, and responsiveness.

Listening to public opinion is *‘responding more specifically to the opinion expressed in the media or in opinion polls.’* (Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007, P.364). Social media tools can be used as means of communication with different levels of citizens, for both speaking and listening. Government officials can listen, discuss, and monitor public opinion expressed on social media tools about certain issues or services. Gov 2.0 initiatives allow government to experience ongoing dialogues in a semi-public platform (Chadwick 2008), post materials (e.g. on Youtube, Twitter, Flickr and Facebook) to establish public debate and consultation including links to particular related government web pages or services to enrich the debate or discussion. The level of government responses to citizens’ expressed opinions can reflect the level of government openness.

Responsiveness was defined as a construct of dialogue at the level where services provided online are helpful and invoke quicker responses to citizens (Tan et al. 2008). Responsiveness is also explicitly linked to government openness (La Porte et al. 2002) where it is about government willingness to provide citizens with information and services. Where governments lack openness it can be perceived by citizens as unresponsiveness or unwillingness to serve them (La Porte et al. 2002). Gov 2.0 is founded on the concept of providing citizen with an innovative role in public service, governance activities, and content sharing activities (Osimo 2008) and thus, it can have an impact on citizens’ perception of their government’s openness (Wigand 2012).

Accountability *“implies an obligation to explain to someone else, who has authority to assess the account and allocate praise or blame for what was done or not done”* (Jones and Stewart 2009, p, 59). The concept of accountability is very important in the government-citizen relationship (Bozeman 2002) and citizen trust can be enhanced online by increasing the levels of interaction and thereby raise perceptions of accountability (Bertot et al. 2010). Accountability is highly connected with a government’s clarity in justifying its operations (Blagescu and Lloyd 2006). Gov 2.0 is extremely important in the way governments support justifications and accountability to the public (Sadeghi et al. 2012). For instance, providing access to government data for citizens generates a culture of accountability and is also a factor for innovation and the generation of value (Fyfe and Crookall 2012). Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) related the accountability value with professionalism, honesty, and integrity.

Professionalism within government implies that citizens can anticipate getting services at a standard level of quality (Liff and Andersson 2013). The ‘wisdom of crowds’ feature of social media can be a governmental professionalism driver, where well-informed citizens can contribute significantly towards government accountability. Citizens’ activity on social media can enlarge their echoes and force government officials to improve their policies and practices and be more accountable. Thus, social media has significant potential to enhance government professionalism and consequently, government accountability (Misuraca 2012).

Honesty refers to *“whether participants believe that the government agency performs its duties soundly, i.e., tells the truth.”* (Grimmelikhuijsen 2009, p.175) and involves the fundamentals of honesty (Guthrie et al. 1990).

Zambonini (2006) argues that Web 2.0 technologies are not just a technology and principles, but a system strengthened by aspects such as honesty. With citizens' interaction on Gov 2.0, citizens can monitor and evaluate the honesty of the information published by government about its performance.

Integrity "by requiring that public interest be paramount, provides the basis for ... accountability" (Armstrong 2005, p. 1). Integrity in government is a very fundamental value especially in Gov 2.0. For example, it has been acknowledged as one of the main principals in the Open Government Declaration by the Open Government Partnership group (2011) for employing the maximum values of integrity within all the group government administrations. Social media tools enable citizens to put pressure on their governments to ensure that they always put the interests of the public first.

Delivery of Quality Public Services

Delivery of quality public services is one of the key drivers of public value (Kearns 2004; Kelly et al. 2002) as noted in Figure 1. From Jørgensen and Bozeman's (2007) inventory, the literature suggest that two groups can contribute to the delivery of quality public services through Gov 2.0: robustness (Zhang and Prybutok 2005) and user orientation (Misuraca 2012).

Robustness Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) have clarified that the concept of robustness in public value is adopted from Information Technology. Therefore, we reuse these values to evaluate the technological aspect of public services quality of Gov 2.0 initiatives. Robustness refers to "*the ability of a system to maintain function even with changes in internal structure or external environment*" (Callaway et al. 2000). In their public value inventory, Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) related the robustness value with values of adaptability, reliability, stability, and timeliness.

Adaptability in technology refers to how easily technology can be changed to extend its utilization (Pérez and Murray 2010). In information systems, conditions such as ease of use, ease of learning, flexibility, and clarity of interfaces are essential for adoption (Gefen and Straub 2000). One of the main advantages that differentiate Web 2.0 from previous technologies is the simplicity of its use (Cormode and Krishnamurthy 2008). Web 2.0 also supports the changing use conditions, such as when a citizen is moving between locations. Web 2.0 social platforms enhance their adaptability and survivability through interacting and integrating with other service systems (Vargo 2008) and Gov 2.0 initiatives have inherited these features. Furthermore, the use of social media is very popular among citizens whose perception of government service robustness is seen through the adaptability of Gov 2.0 initiatives.

Reliability is the level at which public services provided online are available in an accurate and trustworthy manner (Tan et al. 2008) and can increase the robustness of the system (Baker et al. 2008). Citizens should have confidence in government enabling technologies. An increase of citizens' perceptions of confidence in government can be achieved through delivery of reliable online services (Carter and Bélanger 2005). Gov 2.0 supports citizens moving between locations and government services can be accessed anywhere with Internet connection. Moreover, government services provided via social media tools can service the attributes of centralisation and decentralisation. This means that citizens who cannot visit the council's offices (e.g. time poor, elderly, or disabled) are able to obtain all services. Simultaneously citizens who are traveling or working away from the council geographic area can access and obtain these services. Citizens can perceive the robustness of the government services when they are confident that they can obtain services 24/7.

Stability is relates to continuity (Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007), in that it refers to the stability of social systems in retaining information and providing a guarantee the information is correct and up-to-date (Danis et al. 2009). Gov 2.0 initiatives are mainly pro-active services, where citizens can be involved and take part in updating, editing, and sharing. This type of engagement, from government and citizen, provides platforms with high interactivity generated by citizens who are interested in a particular topic. Features such as social networking, social bookmarking, and reputation supervision offer ways through which content is easily navigated, shared, and managed by citizens. Consequently, Gov 2.0 social platforms remain up-to-date and active compared to other static sites that can be updated only by government authorised officials. Thus features of Gov 2.0, such as citizen content creation, can enhance the stability of social systems through developing a feeling of ownership among users which stimulates ongoing use and growth of content (Danis et al. 2009).

Timeliness describes the degree to which information is sufficiently up-to-date and accessible to the user in an adequate timeframe (Aschoff et al. 2007). Because of the active role of citizens in Gov 2.0 services, the value of timeliness can be perceived from many activities. For example, citizens' support and contribute in information update processes through the frequency of change and currency of information (Bouzeghoub 2004). As proposed by Aschoff et al. (2007) citizens can contribute to: (a) the time the information is available for the user (publication speed), (b) the speed of change of the referred objects in a certain domain (volatility), and (c) the revision cycle. Furthermore, social media tools such as Twitter and Facebook have the ability to spread the information among citizens in a very short time frame, which generates the perception of service robustness.

User orientation refers to “the user-centricity of e-government information and services that is directly related to the satisfaction of users” (Karunasena and Deng 2010, p. 289). With the capabilities of Gov 2.0, governments are aiming towards user-centric and user-driven governance instead of silos and government-centricity. The new platforms and tools offer governments the abilities to offer pro-active self-services, service personalisation and the development of personal service pathways (Osimo et al. 2010). Citizens can perceive the value of citizen-centric services through their direct use of Gov 2.0 initiatives and tools online such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, RSS, podcasting, etc. Citizens can participate in policy development in areas of personal interest where they may have knowledge to contribute. They can join or set up virtual communities based on their interests and gather supporters around their ideas about government services and policies. These examples and approaches present how Gov 2.0 can assist public services to provide additional public value by enhancing the quality of services provided through boosting information, choices and customer-oriented services (Kelly et al. 2002). From the public value perspective, Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) related the user orientation value with values of friendliness and timeliness.

Friendliness and timeliness. The former refers to the simplicity by which citizen can access, use, navigate and work on a website (Lu et al. 2009). User friendliness is an extremely important measure and objective for all online services application design. The main focus of any web page design is to be easy to follow, clear, and quick to be loaded by users (Yen 2007). Simplicity of use is an essential factor to determine user-friendliness. Citizens can perceive value by the ease of accessibility to government services through social media tools and through the easy access to services and information, which can be pushed to them based on their preferences. Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) relate the timeliness value to both robustness and to user orientation. In the context of the latter, timeliness contributes to the citizen perception of up-to-dateness and currency of activity.

Achievement of Socially Desirable Outcomes

Achievement of socially outcomes is the third significant driver of public value (Kearns 2004; Kelly et al. 2002). From Jørgensen and Bozeman’s (2007) inventory, the literature suggest that two groups can contribute to the achievement of socially desirable outcomes: *equity* (Kelly et al. 2002) and *the common good* (Meynhardt 2009).

Equity is one of the Western concepts of constitutionalism (Jacucci et al. 2006) where authorities should assure the same treatment of all citizens. Kelly et al. (2002) argue that services provide the vehicle for delivering public value through actual service encounters for users or clients and the distribution of equity and value for citizens. Some scholars refer to equity as equal and non-discriminatory conduct with citizens. However, for the context of this study, equity refers to how governments have the ability to customize service provision in order to satisfy the requirements of the various categories of citizens that they serve (Andrews and Van de Walle 2012). Equality is generally associated with categories such as gender, race, colour, religion or belief, political views, sexual orientation, age, disability or national, social or ethnic origin. Governments can enhance public equity through Gov 2.0 initiatives that can be perceived by all citizens as a real value. For example, in terms of the availability of its applications and services on mobile phones, the ability to ensure that every group in society has the same opportunity to be represented in online debates, and by ensuring that all citizens receive the same information and have the same opportunity for their voice to be heard. From the public value perspective, Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) related the equity value with values of fairness and professionalism.

Fairness is an essential aspect of government processes where citizens’ evaluate the performance of the governmental system (Erlingsson et al. 2013). The observed fairness associated with citizen interaction has a significant effect on citizens’ acceptance of decisions made by government officials (Esaiaasson 2010). Citizens can perceive value from being treated fairly by government through different Gov 2.0 services: for example through the perception of fair and equal access to government services for all citizens (Accenture 2008). Gov 2.0 initiatives can offer equal opportunity for all citizens to participate and contribute in activities such as sharing and retrieving information, answering enquiries and active interaction with other citizens and government. Citizens can also perceive equality as being involved in decision-making processes, particularly enabling involvement of citizens with special needs or perceived inequalities, to have equal opportunities to engage in discourse. Citizens also perceive equality through the feeling that they have a fair opportunity to express their own thoughts and to have it heard by others including government.

Professionalism is previously discussed as a value relating to accountability in the development of public trust and implies that citizens can anticipate getting services at a standard level of quality (Liff and Andersson 2013). We have clarified that the social media ‘wisdom of crowds’ feature can contribute to government accountability, improving policy discussion outcome, and consequently affecting the level of government professionalism. A citizen can also perceive the value of equity through their contribution in the policy development outcome.

Common good means the well-being, participation and contribution of all citizens in society (Maina 2011), and governments must generate or contribute to the common good as well as to public interest (Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007). Jørgensen and Bozeman ignore criticism about insubstantial nature and worthlessness of

common good and public interest concepts and argue that however diffuse these concepts might be, they do include specific characteristic expectations. Governments, they argue, have to serve society in general and not those with particular interests and relate common good to the values of social cohesion and public interest.

Social cohesion consists of a sense of belonging and solidarity for citizens with various backgrounds (Cheong et al. 2007). This includes features such as trust in others, and willingness to assist those who are beyond an individual's main group. Social cohesion is generally linked with community homogeneity. The Canadian Federal government defines social cohesion as "*the ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity within Canada, based on a sense of trust, hope and reciprocity among all Canadians*" (quoted from Jenson 1998, P.4). In this sense, Gov 2.0 initiatives can contribute to a community's social cohesion by offering citizens opportunities to join virtual interest groups via local government sites. Likewise, governments can use social media tools to invite citizens to attend and participate in social events within their local community and bring citizens together and breakdown social and cultural barriers.

Public interest refers to "*those outcomes best serving the long-run survival and wellbeing of a social collective construed as a 'public'*" (Bozeman 2012, P.7). The use of Gov 2.0 initiatives has changed the concept of public interest from the aggregation of individual interests to the result of a dialogue about shared values (Kim and Robinson 2012). Government 2.0 initiatives such as social media tools support citizen dialogue and crowdsourcing. Such features allow citizens to express and share their needs, choices, and shape decisions and collective interest considered as common good.

Summarising the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is proposed as a means of addressing the limitations of existing public value evaluation frameworks that do not fully address the developments of Gov 2.0. The framework is developed by first adopting the main elements of public value creation determined by Kelly et al. (2002), and Kearns (2004). Secondly, it is informed by using applicable public value groups identified by Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) as second and third order constructs to assess the value as perceived by citizens through their use of Gov 2.0 initiatives. Figure 1 presents the proposed conceptual framework. The framework suggests that public value of Gov 2.0 can be created through the development of public trust in government, the delivery of quality public services, and the achievement of socially desirable outcomes (first order constructs).

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The framework we propose in Figure 1 results from a literature review into public value and Gov 2.0. The literature suggests that use of social media by governments can contribute very significantly to the main elements of public value. Our framework represents a starting point for understanding the public value phenomenon from the point of view of the citizens who use Gov 2.0 initiatives implemented by governments. In return closing the gap in previous e-government public value evaluation frameworks. Despite the previous frameworks, our framework considered the interactivity features of Gov 2.0 where the citizens' role and contribution towards public value creation cannot be ignored. The framework is developed based on theoretical perspectives of public value elements as determined by Moore (1995), Kelly et al. (2002), and Kearns (2004). These theoretical perspectives were matched to the applicable public value groups presented in Jørgensen and Bozeman's (2007) public values inventory. The main contribution of this paper is the bringing together of the knowledge from the two different academic areas of information systems and public administration, providing the first conceptual framework to assess the public value of the use of Gov 2.0. We aim to empirically examine the framework to investigate its validity for evaluating the public value perceived by citizens through their use of Gov 2.0. A qualitative research approach using semi-structured interviews as the main method will be used for assessing the public value perceived by citizens through the Gov 2.0.

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